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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN ANGOLA (UNOA)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1268 (1999) of 15 October 1999, in which the Council, inter alia, requested me to provide every three months a report on developments in Angola, including recommendations about additional measures the Council might consider to promote the peace process. It covers developments since October 1999.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

2. In the last few months, the overall situation in Angola has seen a major change following the successful military campaign undertaken by the Government, which has resulted in re-establishing State authority in the vast territory previously occupied by the União National para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA). The hostilities, which affected several regions of Angola, have continued to cause immense suffering for the Angolan people and the destruction of the country's infrastructure. The recent escalation of fighting into Namibia is also a major source of concern.

3. The Government has maintained the position that it does not consider Mr. Jonas Savimbi a credible partner for dialogue, given his record of not implementing his previous undertakings in good faith. At the same time, in a statement made on 11 November 1999, President José Eduardo dos Santos said that all Savimbi's supporters who surrendered to the government forces would be allowed to carry out political activities. He also stressed that the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex) was still a valid basis for the peace process in Angola, and he outlined a programme of action that would culminate in the holding of legislative and presidential elections. However, the dates for such elections were not announced.

4. In the meantime, the Government continued to reinforce its military action on the ground, as well as a campaign aimed at the political isolation of UNITA. To this effect, consultations were conducted by the Government with various countries, particularly those in the subregion, in an attempt to deny Mr. Savimbi lines of communication and logistic support. In this context,

several high-level meetings were held with the representatives of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Zambia, focusing on issues related to security along Angola's border; some important bilateral understandings and agreements have reportedly been reached in this regard.

5. In Luanda and some provincial capitals, the UNITA Restoration Committee (UNITA-Renovada) continued to be active, calling for the earliest termination of the conflict by Mr. Savimbi's group and urging his supporters to surrender or defect to the Government. In addition, UNITA-Renovada reiterated the need for the Government to resume the demobilization of UNITA fighters to be incorporated in the proposed "fourth branch" of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA).

6. Various political parties and church groups have also appealed for the earliest resumption of the national dialogue and a cessation of hostilities. To this effect, some political groups are calling for an inclusive multi-party conference, open to all major political figures without exclusion, in order to find a lasting solution to the Angolan conflict. The Catholic Church, which enjoys a large following in Angola, as well as other important non-governmental organizations, has also repeatedly urged UNITA to lay down its arms and appealed to the Government to seek a peaceful solution expeditiously. The Church has also offered its good offices, provided that both parties agree. Following President dos Santos's New Year's address indicating that the Government was open to dialogue with all "valid interlocutors", the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) called for the convening of a national forum in which all political parties would discuss the main problems affecting the country, as a starting point for a national dialogue.

7. Shortly after the adoption on 15 October 1999 of Security Council resolution 1268 (1999), I received a letter from the Minister of External Relations of Angola (S/1999/1099, annex), in which he reaffirmed his Government's position regarding the mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA). The Minister indicated that the new Office should serve as a liaison between the Government of Angola and the Secretary-General, with a view to ensuring a close follow-up of the situation in the country by the Council in matters related to humanitarian assistance, capacity-building and the strengthening of Angolan government institutions in the field of human rights. In my reply addressed to the Foreign Minister dated 11 November 1999, I took note of the Government's position and stressed that the substantive staff of the new Office would perform the functions outlined in Council resolution 1268 (1999). I also reaffirmed the readiness of the United Nations to contribute to the promotion of peace in the country and to regional security. At present, the Secretariat is still awaiting a reply from the Angolan Government on the latest version of the revised text of the Status-of-Mission Agreement (SOMA) for UNOA which was transmitted to the Foreign Minister on 17 December 1999. However, on 12 January 2000, UNOA was informed that the Council of Ministers Standing Committee, chaired by President dos Santos, had approved the Status-of-Mission Agreement and forwarded it to the National Assembly for approval.

8. The expert panel of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola visited Angola and other countries in southern Africa in October 1999 to discuss ways of improving

the implementation of the measures imposed against UNITA, contained in Council resolutions 864 (1993), 1127 (1997) and 1173 (1998). While in Angola, the panel held very useful discussions with government officials and relevant organizations. The Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Robert Fowler of Canada, arrived in Luanda on 8 January 2000 to consult with the Angolan authorities on the impact of sanctions against UNITA and discuss additional measures to strengthen the implementation of the sanctions regime.

9. In a separate development, the Secretary-General of UNITA, Lukamba Paulo "Gato", indicated in a press interview in November 1999 that the Russian crew members of an aircraft shot down by UNITA were alive and were being held hostage, and that UNITA would be prepared to release them on humanitarian grounds. The United Nations remains deeply concerned about the fate of those and other missing personnel in Angola and will continue to do everything possible to secure their earliest release.

III. MILITARY ASPECTS

10. Following the general offensive launched by FAA in September 1999, the Government gradually re-established its authority in the central, northern and eastern regions where FAA had gained control of a number of key UNITA areas. UNITA's strongholds of Bailundo, Mungo, Andulo and N'harêa were captured in a decisive campaign. Recently, FAA made additional gains in the central highlands, in particular, securing control of Waku-Kungo locality (Cuanza Sul province) which had been under heavy UNITA attack, and claimed to have seized a significant quantity of UNITA military equipment.

11. At the same time, the government forces opened a front in Uíge and Zaire provinces, which are considered key areas in view of the large concentration of UNITA troops there and the importance of Maquela do Zombo as a logistic support base. According to reports, government forces are attempting to dislodge UNITA elements from these areas, and along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

12. FAA launched another offensive southwards from Luena in order to capture UNITA elements attempting to regroup in Moxico province near the Zambian border. According to government sources, a significant number of UNITA troops surrendered with heavy weapons in that area. FAA also captured Savate, a locality in southern Cuando Cubango province, and is pursuing its offensive in the south-eastern part of the country. In this process, the government forces subsequently gained control of key localities such as Lucusse, Cangamba, Lumbala-N'guimbo and Cuangar, and a large number of UNITA troops, including officers, reportedly surrendered or were taken prisoners. With the support of Namibian security forces, FAA reportedly also captured Jamba in the same province, thus consolidating its position and gaining almost total control of the southern border. According to the press, Namibian security forces sealed the border in the Caprivi Strip to prevent the retreat of UNITA fighters into Namibian territory. Recently, several civilians were killed in the area, presumably by UNITA forces. It should be noted that military operations on the eastern and southern Angolan borders have spilled into neighbouring Zambia and

Namibia where, in addition to the refugee influx, bombing and shelling incidents have been reported on both sides of the border areas.

13. FAA's intensive military campaign in the central highlands and the eastern region has put additional pressure on UNITA forces which, as a result, are resorting to guerrilla warfare. FAA claimed to have captured or destroyed more than 40 per cent of UNITA's conventional forces and to have located the whereabouts of Mr. Savimbi. For its part, the UNITA leadership claimed to have undertaken a strategic withdrawal from Bailundo, together with heavy equipment, and to have re-established its headquarters at Sautar, 200 kilometres east of Andulo.

14. Meanwhile, security conditions have reportedly improved in the north-eastern region of Angola. The city of Malanje was secured by FAA after a long siege by UNITA. Road traffic has resumed from Malanje to the Cuango basin, despite UNITA's sporadic ambushes on government military convoys. In Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces, the main diamond mining areas are under the protection of FAA and private security companies are rendering the roads relatively safe. UNITA activities have been limited to banditry and attacks by small groups of fugitives from the central highlands. Most areas in Cuanza Sul province and the southern region have also enjoyed a relatively long period of calm. In Cuanza Sul, UNITA's attacks and ambushes have decreased considerably since the FAA offensive started in the central highlands. Road traffic in the traditionally affected Luanda-Sumbe-Lobito stretch is relatively safe. Since the FAA's successful offensive in the northern part of Huíla province, security conditions have also improved in the area. However, some FAA elements were recently accused by local non-governmental organizations of perpetrating human rights abuses, including killings of villagers suspected to be UNITA sympathizers in Lunda Sul and Malanje provinces.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS

15. The intensification of military operations and the still precarious security conditions throughout the country have been accompanied by reports of human rights abuses. However, since the United Nations has no access to most parts of Angola, little information is available about the treatment of the civilian population or others hors de combat in the areas formerly controlled by UNITA that were recently captured by government forces. Nor is there much confirmed information about the abuses perpetrated by UNITA that are frequently reported by the press. It appears, however, that various military elements, including UNITA, have been responsible for the looting of crops and destruction of property.

16. The intensification of the conflict and the re-establishment of government authority in the areas previously held by UNITA, have triggered a debate among members of Angolan society on ways to promote the democratization process in the country. In this connection, the Human Rights Division (HRD) of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) has pursued its activities in close cooperation with the Government, State institutions and civil society. By the end of 1999, several capacity-building projects had been developed in cooperation between the United Nations and various government ministries, State

institutions, non-governmental organizations and professional associations that are being implemented in collaboration with the Irish non-governmental organization Trocaire and with the support of donor countries. The system of judiciary and law enforcement in Angola suffers from a lack of human and material resources, low salary levels, outdated laws and a lack of proper training. The HRD projects have therefore been focused on the training of prosecutors and judges, on improvement of infrastructure, on public access to law and court proceedings, and on the need for law reform. However, a United Nations training project of the police still awaits approval of the authorities. At the same time, a prison programme of HRD has addressed legal issues and conditions of detention. The need for such a programme is underscored by cases of detainees who have been awaiting trial for up to four years under severely inadequate conditions since they were arrested. The HRD projects also include the training of Angolan human rights counsellors and support to Angolan lawyers.

17. Since the relocation of all MONUA personnel to Luanda in early 1999, the HRD has had to discontinue its activities outside the Angolan capital, except in Benguela province where it has set up human rights centres. In addition, HRD has carried out assessment missions in Sumbe (Cuanza Sul province) and Huambo, and has recently visited several other provinces to identify new projects for expanded operations. Meanwhile, the Government has also identified six provinces for priority human rights activities in 2000.

18. While the joint efforts of HRD, the Government and civil society continue to contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law, the challenges in this area remain daunting. Freedom of expression has come under considerable pressure and journalists have been subjected to legal proceedings, especially when they report on issues considered to be sensitive. In a case widely covered by the press, an Angolan journalist, Rafael Marques, was arrested on 16 October 1999, detained incommunicado for several days and then held in pre-trial detention before being released on bail. While such incidents have resulted in increased self-censorship, the media and some civil groups have nevertheless continued to be outspoken on a range of important issues, including activities of groups opposed to the war, corruption, economic mismanagement, forced military conscription and the need for dialogue and reconciliation. It is obvious that the overall situation in the country could only benefit from an improved human rights environment and from persistent efforts to eliminate human rights violations.

V. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

19. The humanitarian situation in the country remains precarious as a result of continued military activities, with widespread insecurity in several regions of Angola and disruptions in the rehabilitation of social and economic structures and services. The war-affected civilian population is estimated to be 3.7 million people, of whom nearly 2 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs). Angola's ranking in the human development index fell from 156 in 1998 to 160 in 1999. Forty-two per cent of children under 5 years of age are either severely or moderately underweight and, if they survive, are likely to develop health problems later. Agricultural production for the year 2000 will not be satisfactory for the population.

20. The humanitarian status of one third of the Angolan population, living in inaccessible areas, remains unknown. It is expected that the extension of State administration in the areas formerly controlled by UNITA would facilitate access to all vulnerable populations. Improving conditions in these areas would represent a major challenge to the Government of Angola and the international community.

21. The security situation has seriously constrained international humanitarian work in Angola. Humanitarian agencies have been compelled to rely on expensive air transport to reach provincial capitals, but are often not able to venture to locations outside these capitals. Landmine incidents have dramatically increased in recent months. Between January and November 1999, 409 civilians, mostly women, on their way to or from their fields, fell victim to landmines. Mine clearance has been curtailed since donors suspended their assistance to this programme owing to the state of war. Yet, it is of critical importance that international support be extended to such programmes, in order to ensure the safe resumption of agricultural and commercial activities. Failure to do so would only penalize innocent people. The funding requirement of the 2000 United Nations Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for Angola amounts to $258 million. It is hoped that the donor community will respond generously to the appeal.

VI. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS

22. During the last quarter of 1999, serious macroeconomic difficulties continued to affect the Angolan economy, resulting in the deterioration of all key economic indicators. By November, the annual rate of inflation had reached 335.3 per cent, while the value of the national currency still declined, despite the Government's efforts to merge the official and parallel exchange rates. The recent increase in oil prices is a positive development for the country; but, with the continuation of the conflict, an increasingly large proportion of national resources are obviously diverted to the war effort. The 1999 Human Development Report[1] indicated that, during the period of relative peace witnessed in Angola from 1996 to 1998, the human development index had registered an upward trend but, with the resumption of the war, it declined slightly.

23. As a result of the resumption of the conflict in December 1998, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), like other United Nations programmes and agencies, had to scale down its operational activities. Two major UNDP programmes were discontinued, in particular support to the reintegration of ex-combatants and vocational training for demobilized soldiers. A third nationwide programme, the Community Rehabilitation and National Reconciliation, had to be refocused to concentrate on secure areas of the country. In view of the increasing number of landmine incidents, UNDP has pursued its advocacy role in support of the continuation of the mine action programme, focusing on mine awareness campaigns and data-collection processing.

24. While, as indicated above, some programmes had to be curtailed, new initiatives were launched by UNDP to assist the Government in addressing severe problems, including the alarming number of IDPs. In particular, UNDP initiated a new project to support the reintegration of vulnerable groups in selected

vinces, in order to help bridge the gap between relief, reconstruction and elopment activities. In addition, UNDP intends to continue to assist the ernment in the implementation of long-term development projects. In this ard, UNDP proposed the 1999 National Human Development Report, focusing on role of civil society in improving human development.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

In line with the intention expressed by the Angolan Government to acquire e MONUA assets, President dos Santos and my former Special Representative for gola established a joint commission to oversee the liquidation of the Mission. llowing a meeting of the joint commission on 13 March 1999 and further lengthy gotiations, the Government made an offer to the United Nations on 11 November purchase MONUA assets amounting to approximately $8.3 million. This offer s reaffirmed on 6 December 1999. Prior to completing the sale, the Government quested a reverification of the assets and associated paperwork. This process now in the final stage and the sale of MONUA assets to the authorities should completed by the end of January 2000.

. With regard to issues related to the two United Nations aircraft (UN806 and 806A) that were shot down in the central region of Angola in December 1998 and nuary 1999, MONUA representatives met with the Angolan military authorities in ambo on 17 December 1999 to coordinate the return of United Nations teams to e crash sites, taking into account the security situation in this area. greement was reached for a reconnaissance team to be dispatched to both sites ring the course of this month.

VIII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

. The General Assembly, by its resolution 53/228 of 8 June 1999, appropriated amount of $7.4 million for the liquidation of MONUA for the period from July 1999 to 30 June 2000. I also obtained authorization from the Advisory mmittee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to enter into commitments in amount of $5.3 million to meet additional resources associated with the tention of both military and civilian personnel beyond the originally ojected deadlines for withdrawal and liquidation. I intend to seek propriation and assessment of this additional amount from the Assembly during s resumed fifty-fourth session. As at 31 December 1999, unpaid assessed ntributions to the MONUA special account amounted to $91.3 million. The total tstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date mounted to $1.5 billion. With regard to requirements relating to the stablishment of UNOA, I have since also obtained funding for its requirements rough 15 April 2000 in the context of the programme budget.

IX. OBSERVATIONS

. The protracted conflict in Angola and the risks of spillover into the eighbouring countries remain a source of major concern for the international mmunity. Obviously, UNITA bears the primary responsibility for the current

state of affairs. Its refusal to comply with obligations under the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex), in particular its failure to demilitarize its forces and to allow State administration to be extended throughout the country, precipitated the resumption of widespread hostilities.

29. Following a major military offensive throughout the country in recent months, the Angolan Government has gradually re-established its authority in areas formerly controlled by UNITA, including the latter's strongholds in the central highlands. As a result, some measure of stability has been achieved in several regions.

30. However, the humanitarian situation, which affects a growing number of vulnerable people, remains extremely alarming. It is very much hoped that the extension of State administration to areas formerly occupied by UNITA will facilitate access to all populations in need. I urge the donor community to respond as generously as possible to the 2000 United Nations Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal for Angola. At the same time, the democratization process and observance of human rights will remain essential steps for the normalization of life in the country and the pursuit of an effective national reconciliation process.

31. I earnestly hope that the draft Status-of-Mission Agreement can be concluded without further delay, so that UNOA may begin to assume its functions, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1268 (1999) of 15 October 1999. Meanwhile, the Secretariat is finalizing the selection of the Head and support staff of UNOA. At the same time, as Council members are aware, I have appointed Mr. Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria as my Special Adviser on Africa, with special focus on Angola among other issues.

32. Ultimately, only a political solution can help to restore durable peace and security in Angola. In this spirit, I welcome the recent indication by the Angolan authorities that the Lusaka Protocol remains a valid basis for the peace process. I strongly urge UNITA to demonstrate convincingly that it is prepared to fulfil its commitments under the Lusaka Protocol and to seek genuine national reconciliation. It is hoped that the evolving situation in Angola may offer new opportunities to initiate an inclusive dialogue leading to the lasting peace and national reconciliation that the suffering Angolan people have aspired to for so long. The United Nations would welcome such a development and would be ready, if the parties so wished, to play an active role in furthering this process.

Notes

[1] New York, Oxford University Press for the United Nations Development Programme, 1999.